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March 10, 2021



Chair Abney and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Library Association (RILA) I am submitting this written testimony in support of **H 5671 - An Act Relating to Libraries—Office of Library and Information Services—State Aid to Libraries.**

RILA fully supports H 5671, which removes outdated language and updates certain sections of the R.I. General Laws, Title 29 (Libraries).

R.I. Gen. Laws §29-6-2 and §29-6-3 include the formula and eligibility requirements for state aid to public libraries. Changes to this section would eliminate language added for adjustments that were specific to 2009-2010. The other change in this section would remove special funding provisions for the Pontiac Free Library in Warwick. These provisions were written into the statute before the creation of a new program that provided state aid to Pontiac and other public libraries with endowments which were not otherwise eligible to receive state aid. Since the Pontiac Free Library and other public libraries now receive proportional state aid based on expenditures from their endowments, the provision is unnecessary.

R.I. Gen. Laws §29-6-9 authorizes the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) to create a statewide resource sharing network and services to provide all Rhode Islanders with access to information resources. This section was enacted in 1989 and last updated in 2011 so much of the language is outdated. The proposed changes in this section reflect the advances in library resource-sharing methods and telecommunications that support the network.

R.I. Gen. Laws §29-6-9 also includes requirements for awarding the contract for the statewide reference resource center or AskRI. RILA supports changing the provision to seek requests from proposals from every two years to every five years. Expanding the contract period will reduce the burden on the host library and enable it to develop innovative programs and long-term strategic goals for the service.

The changes proposed in this legislation will be beneficial to Rhode Island's public libraries. The bill has no fiscal impact. But updating the language in the statute will

make the communication between libraries and OLIS clearer, clarify government process and remove outdated statutory language.

In closing, RILA respectfully asks that the committee votes in favor of this legislation

Sincerely,

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